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PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Country, intercountry and global programmes

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Note by the Administrator

I. THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS

1. The third country programme for Equatorial Guinea, covering the period from 1988 to 1991, was approved by the Governing Council in February 1988, (DP/CP/EQG/3). The Government requested a one-year extension of the programme to take into account the new orientations and priorities emerging in light of the movement towards democratization, in the preparation of the fourth country programme. The Government also wished that the conclusions arising from a round-table conference and sectoral consultations with donors in 1992 be taken into consideration. During the one-year extension the central themes of the third country programme continued to be relevant, namely, development of the productive sectors to meet the basic needs of the population in the areas of education, health and human resources development; and strengthening of public administration.

2. The extension of the third country programme for Equatorial Guinea was approved by the Administrator and endorsed at the thirty-ninth session of the Governing Council (DP/CP/EQG/3/EXTENSION I).

3. Overall political and human rights conditions in Equatorial Guinea in 1992 did not appear sufficient to allow the establishment of the necessary climate of confidence between the Government and its national and international partners. Under these circumstances, the Administrator decided that the country programme for Equatorial Guinea, to be presented to the Governing Council in June 1993, should be accompanied by a note by the Administrator, informing the Council of his assessment of the overall environment for implementing the programme.

4. At the request of the Government, a UNDP-led mission composed of representatives of the United Nations, UNDP and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights (UNCHR) visited Equatorial Guinea from 3 to 8 April 1993. The mission was received by the President of the Republic. The mission held extensive consultations with the ministerial delegation which participated in the bilateral negotiations between the Government and the political parties, from 10 February to 18 March 1993, as well as with representatives of the opposition parties. The mission also consulted the diplomatic community and representatives of the main aid partners and local representatives of United Nations agencies. The discussions focused on human rights and electoral issues, particularly those concerning the democratization process under way in the country, in order to obtain an assessment of the environment for the implementation of the country programme and to allow the Administrator to inform the Governing Council accordingly.

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTS

5. After an attentive analysis of the views expressed by all concerned, the mission noted with satisfaction the legalization of 10 new political parties and the recent political developments which culminated in the signature, on 18 March 1993, by the Government and the opposition parties, of a "National Pact" concerning the elections to be held later in 1993. In the mission's view, these were important steps towards the democratization of the political system in Equatorial Guinea. The mission also noted with satisfaction the recent freeing of political detainees.

6. The mission observed that the climate of confidence between the Government and the opposition parties, as well as between the Government and its external partners, still needed to be strengthened. The lack of confidence stemmed principally, in the mission's view, from the perception that insufficient progress had been made with respect to human rights. In addition, the new political process so recently set in motion was not yet firmly established with respect to legal, institutional and operational mechanisms.

7. The mission has proposed to the Government the following measures to assist Equatorial Guinea in building confidence, both internally and externally, paving the way for free and fair elections, peaceful transition to democratic and participatory governance and sustained economic and human development:

(a) Full cooperation with UNCHR with regard to its resolution 1993/69 of 10 March 1993 and with the Urgent Plan of Action therein approved. The mission noted with satisfaction that the Government was prepared to accept the visit of the UNCHR special rapporteur and the visit of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to the prisons;

(b) The assignment, for an initial duration of one year, of a human rights officer, attached to the UNDP office in Malabo, assisting the Government inter alia, in the harmonization of national legislation with international conventions on human rights and advising on their implementation at the country level;

(c) A thorough revision of the electoral census, with the participation and agreement of the political parties; and

(d) A thorough revision of the electoral law, with the participation and agreement of the political parties.

8. Taking into account the agreements signed by the Government and the political parties in the "National Pact" of 18 March 1993, the discussions with the different parties and the recommendations of the electoral experts, the mission concluded that, subject to the agreement of the Government with the proposals in paragraph 7 above, it will recommend that the United Nations and UNDP provide assistance to the preparation of the electoral process, inter alia, by the organization of a donor resource mobilization conference. The mission also recommended that, subject to the satisfactory outcome of the election preparations, which will require negotiated arrangements agreed by the Government and the political parties, the United Nations should consider providing election monitoring and observation services.

9. The mission also reviewed with the Government the conditions for the application of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, with particular regard to those applicable to locally employed staff members. The Government has confirmed its willingness to comply with the provisions of the Convention; some provisions of the Standard Basic Agreement will require the review of both parties to ascertain whether they apply also to locally recruited staff members.

III. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

10. The Administrator wishes to inform the Governing Council that if the above recommendations are followed, there should be demonstrable progress on human rights and democratization by the time the country programme is presented to the Council for approval, upon which the Administrator will report orally.

11. The Administrator also wishes to inform the Governing Council that, whereas some aid partners have made their assistance to Equatorial Guinea conditional upon progress on human rights and democratization, this constraint could be removed in the weeks and months ahead, when donors are convinced of the application of the confidence-building measures proposed by the United Nations/UNDP mission to the Government and referred to in paragraphs 7 and 8 above. Such a development would permit the full achievement of the objectives of the country programme.

12. These confidence-building measures, culminating in free and fair elections, would thereafter provide the basis for a round-table conference, organized with assistance from UNDP, to consider Equatorial Guinea's development policies, strategies and plans and to mobilize resources for their implementation.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

13. On the basis of the foregoing, the Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fourth country programme for Equatorial Guinea.